



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**PERCEPTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN IRAN**

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**PERCEPTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT IN IRAN**

**By**

**HOSSEIN ALEKAJBAF**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**September 2005**



## **DEDICATION**

**THIS WORK IS HUMBLY DEDICATED TO MY WIFE, MY LOVELY SON ARASH  
(I HOPE THAT HE WILL BE A SUCCESSFUL PERSON IN THE FUTURE), MY  
PARENTS, AND ABOVE ALL TO ALLAH, WHO IS “THE MOST BENEFICIENT,  
AND MERCIFUL”.**

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment  
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**September 2005**

**Chairman: Professor Jayum Anak Jawan, PhD**

**Faculty: Human Ecology**

This study seeks to examine the perceptions and knowledge of local residents on the effectiveness of local government in Iran within the context of the process of decentralization.

The study was based on qualitative and quantitative approaches. On the first, the study relied on published materials, both scholarly works and government data. On the quantitative method, the study was based on a case study conducted in the Tehran City Council area.

Quantitative data were collected using a set of questionnaire that was established within the Tehran City Council area. A total of 462 responses were successfully collected from

the respondents. In addition, interviews were also conducted with selected informants who comprised officials of the local authority in Tehran city.

The main findings of the study can be summarized as follows. Firstly, the study had discussed the development of local government as well as the process of decentralization in Iran and in particular the evolution of local government in Tehran city. Secondly, the study also discussed the structure and function of Tehran City Council, including discussing selected weakness in their structure and functions in relations to the delivery of services to the residents. Thirdly, the study also showed the low/ or negative level of perceptions among the respondents on the effectiveness of the functions of local government. The study also showed the weak relationship between the respondents and the officials of local authority. Lastly, the study showed that there were several areas that can be enhanced in order to improve on the functions of local government in its effort to provide better services to its resident, namely the need to review rules and regulations regarding local government, training needs of personnel of local authority, and the need to provide more information for residents so that the latter are aware of the services that they can get from their local authority.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat, Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PERSEPSI DAN PENGETAHUAN TERHADAP KEBERKESANAN  
KERAJAN TEMPATAN DI IRAN**

Oleh

**HOSSEIN ALEKAJBAF**

September 2005

**Pengerusi : Profesor Jayum Anak Jawan, PhD**  
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Kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji persepsi dan pengetahuan penduduk tempatan terhadap keberkesanan kerajaan tempatan di Iran dalam konteks proses desentralisasi.

Kajian ini didasarkan kepada pendekatan kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Sehubungan kaedah pertama, kajian ini telah bergantung kepada bahan-bahan bercetak, bahan-bahan kesarjanaan dan data-data kerajaan. Berkaitan kaedah kuantitatif, kajian ini telah didasarkan kepada sebuah kajian kes yang dijalankan di kawasan Majlis Perbandaran Tehran.

Data kuantitatif telah dipungut menggunakan satu set soalselidik yang telah dijalankan di kawasan Majlis Perbandaran Tehran. Sejumlah 462 respons telah berjaya dipungut daripada respondent. Selain itu, temuduga juga telah dijalankan di kalangan beberapa

informan terpilih yang terdiri daripada pegawai-pegawai kerajaan tempatan di Bandar Tehran.

Dapatan utama kajian dapat disimpulkan seperti berikut. Pertama, kajian telah membincangkan pembangunan kerajaan tempatan serta juga proses desentralisasi di Iran dan khususnya proses evolusi kerajaan tempatan di Bandar Tehran. Kedua, kajian telah membincangkan struktur dan fungsi Majlis perbandaran Tehran, termasuk membincangkan beberapa kelemahan di dalam struktur dan fungsi berkaitan proses penyampaian perkhidmatan kepada para penduduk. Ketiga, kajian juga menunjukkan tahap persepi yang rendah/ atau negatif di kalangan penduduk mengenai keberkesanan fungsi kerajaan tempatan. Kajian juga menunjukkan hubungan yang renggang di antara responden dengan pegawai-pegawai kerajaan tempatan. Akhir sekali, kajian menunjukkan terdapat beberapa bidang/ tumpuan yang memerlukan perhatian/ tindakan demi mempertingkatkan perkhidmatan kepada pelanggan, seperti keperluan mengkaji semula peraturan/ perundangan mengenai kerajaan tempatan, keperluan latihan kepada pegawai-pegawai kerajaan tempatan, dan keperluan mendedahkan maklumat kepada penduduk supaya mereka tahu tentang pelbagai perkhidmatan yang ada di kawasan mereka.

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Hossein Alekajbaf

I certify that an Examination Committee met on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005 to conduct the final examination of Hossein Alekajbaf on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Perceptions and Knowledge on the Effectiveness of a Local Government in Iran" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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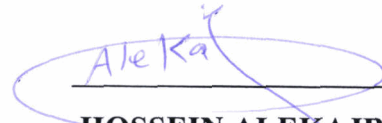
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**HOSSEIN ALEKAJBAF**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ADP</b>	Azerbaijan Democrat Party
<b>EDCS</b>	Expediency Discernment Council of the System
<b>HCP</b>	Higher Council Provinces
<b>ICL</b>	Iran Constitution Law
<b>IRGC</b>	Islamic Revolution's Guard Corps
<b>IRI</b>	Islamic Republic of Iran
<b>LG</b>	Local Government
<b>MP</b>	Members of Parliament
<b>NGO's</b>	Non Governmental Organizations
<b>PBO</b>	Plan and Budget Organization
<b>SCCAF</b>	Chief of the Supreme Command Council of the Armed Forces
<b>SNSC</b>	Supreme National Security Council
<b>TCC</b>	Tehran City Council
<b>TCH</b>	Tehran City Hall
<b>KTCC</b>	Knowledge on Tehran City Council
<b>PTCC</b>	Perceptions on Tehran City Council
<b>KTCH</b>	Knowledge on Tehran City Hall
<b>PTCH</b>	Perceptions on Tehran City Hall

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

A government is generally understood as “the political system by which a nation or community is administered and regulated” (Encyclopedia Britannica, CD Rom: 2004). Anderson (1991) primarily stressed the concepts of nation and community as “imagined” by citing the experiences of some Southeast Asian countries’ nationalist movements. He pointed out that since the Second World War, “successful revolution has defined itself in national terms” and in so doing, “has grounded itself firmly in a territorial and social space inherited from the pre-revolutionary past” (1991:2). Although Iran represents a distinct political system in the Islamic World especially after its 1979 Revolution, its government in recent years has undergone structural reforms as a response to internal power struggle, and most importantly, to the international clamor for people’s participation and human rights advocacy.

In the past, the basic duties of government were to establish and preserve public needs, order, and justice. With the growing population and development of societies, the people’s expectations of their government also grew. For this reason the government started to intervene into most economic, social, and cultural affairs of society. This was to meet the ever increasing demands placed upon them, to plan and regulate their activities in order to stimulate the national economy. This development continued to the point where, in many countries, a huge and complex governmental bureaucracy evolved.





Thus, as the world politics became homogenized and polarized, the emergence of highly centralized systems of government in the 1950s in most developing countries paved the way to accommodate the delivery of public services to the periphery of power. Thus, there was a shift in the political structures in the 1970s when leaders recognized the impetus to transfer “power from the central government to local authorities” (Rondinelli et.al., 1983:10-13). A study on centralized bureaucracies done by Dennis (1983) showed that even if the central government does deliver goods and services to the local levels, he observed that the management of local affairs is stereotyped. One of the reasons he cited was the tendency of the central planners to “to overlook variations in local conditions”. Although he noted that the bureaucracy in general encourages people’s participation in various ways, the issue on centralization of power continues to play a major role in the study of political structures and systems. Obviously, this desire to closely monitor how a system works is based on his idea that structures in all countries undergo changes which can be drastic, dramatic, rapid, or slow because within these structures are the social, administrative, and political forces, whose interactions result to reforms and reorganization. The results, according to him, are “administrative reforms and reorganization”.

In the last decade, attention was directed towards representation in local institutions through which public affairs of the localities can be administered through local efforts. Some of the reasons identified for this “shift” were the realization that the pressure of aggregate national and local responsibilities placed upon the central government makes inefficiency inescapable, and that the central authority has demonstrated inability to pay appropriate attention to specific local issues as they do